

spotlight

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A PUBLICATION FOR VOTING MEMBERS OF MARYLAND FARM BUREAU

Maryland Farm Bureau Seeks Court Protection for Family Farms



On July 18th, in the Circuit Court for Dorchester County, Maryland Farm Bureau filed a lawsuit requesting declaratory judgment and injunctive relief to protect the confidentiality of business plans for Maryland farmers. The request for relief is a result of legal action taken by the Waterkeepers Alliance to force the release of farm nutrient management information by the Maryland Department of the Agriculture.

“Nutrient management plans are critical business planning documents for farm operations,” explained Mike Phipps, President of the Maryland Farm Bureau. “No other business in this state is required to release proprietary information that may impact the company’s competitiveness.”

Maryland farmers are required by the 1998 Water Quality Improvement Act to file an initial nutrient management plan and annual reports on implementation with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). The agency reviews the plans and conducts regulatory inspections on farms to ensure that nutrients are being used according to plant needs. The WQIA established one of America’s most stringent

farmer nutrient management programs and provided tools to farmers to help them improve their environmental stewardship efforts.

“When this law was passed, farmers were given assurances by the General Assembly and the Department of Agriculture that private business information would not be released to third parties,” said Pat Langenfelder, First Vice President of the Farm Bureau. “It’s not about skirting the law or refusing to do our part to protect the Bay. This is about protecting the business documents that make each farm in Maryland competitive.”

Since the passage of the 1998 law, specific language concerning the confidentiality of plans has been interpreted to mean that MDA must keep information that identifies a specific operation private. MDA’s own regulations require the information to be maintained in a confidential manner. Aggregate information about overall implementation of the law and enforcement activity has been released regularly to the Maryland General Assembly and to the general public.

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Join Your Farm Bureau Family in San Antonio

Plans set for 90th AFBF Convention

More than 6,000 Farm Bureau members are expected to attend the 90th annual American Farm Bureau Federation Convention in San Antonio, Texas, scheduled for January 11-14, 2009. Keynote speakers, special interest sessions, fun and fellowship await attendees from every state in the nation.

The Maryland Farm Bureau delegation will stay at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio located on the famous Riverwalk. From the Hyatt you can walk or take a water taxi to restaurants, shops, The Alamo and the convention center.

Preliminary plans include a group dinner at the Saltgrass Steakhouse. Optional tours are also on the drawing board that include stops at several ranch

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Maryland Farm Bureau Exceeds 30,000 Member Goal

At press time, Maryland Farm Bureau had processed 30,571 members for 2008, an all-time high. In June, the organization secured quota status and the Navigator Award, two growth goals established by the American Farm Bureau Federation, and then set its sights on the 30,000 member mark. Final results will not be known until the end of August, but regardless of the number, a new record high membership will be achieved.

On the county level, Carroll County was first in the state to reach their county membership goal of increasing their regular membership by 1 percent over last year. Congratulations to county president David Beall, membership chairman Bill Rasche and the entire Carroll County Farm Bureau team for setting the pace. Since then, ten additional counties have reached their county membership goal.

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**Maryland Farm Bureau
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**Maryland Farm Bureau
 Spotlight**

Susan G. Summers, Editor
 12221 Fingerboard Road
 Monrovia, MD 21770
 (301) 865-1045 • Fax (301) 865-1057
 e-mail: ssummers@comcast.net

Designed by Jennifer C. Hankey,
 HDI Corporation
 PO Box 3583 • Frederick, MD 21705
 (301) 668-3333 • (301)668-3334 fax
 e-mail: jhankey@hdicorporation.net

USPS 012-269-ISSN1080-3556
 (410) 922-3426 mdfb1@erols.com
 website: www.mdfarmbureau.com

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O'Malley Celebrates Kent County as Best Rural Place in America to Live

Announces Cover Crop, 2010 Bay Trust Fund Grants and Farmland Preservation

Surrounded by fields of winter wheat almost ready to be harvested for flour and cover crops on a soon-to-be preserved farm, members of Gov. Martin O'Malley's Chesapeake Bay Cabinet - Agriculture Secretary Roger Richardson, Environment Secretary Shari T. Wilson, Natural Resources Secretary John R. Griffin and Planning Secretary Richard E. Hall - celebrated Kent County's outstanding land use planning and successful farming activities that gave rise to its designation by Progressive Farmer magazine as the Best Rural Place in America to Live.

Continuing that momentum locally, the group announced a series of statewide conservation measures including: the opening of sign up for the largest winter cover crop program ever; the beginning of this year's farmland easement purchases by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF); and the launch of the first-ever grant program provided by the recently passed Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund. The announcements were followed by locally-grown and made refreshments.

"The Kent County we see today is a model recognized nationally for its grassroots, wise land use planning, protecting its quality of life and natural resources and its residents' needs," said Gov. O'Malley. "Our shared priorities of growing and protecting our middle class, our family-owned businesses and our family farms, the health of our environment and to protect opportunity for more people rather than fewer is evident in Kent County. I congratulate the county and its residents for their accomplishments and encourage their continued strength in the state's conservation programs."

In his remarks, Agriculture Secretary Richardson rolled out the enrollment for this year's record \$18 million cover crop program. Cover crops are widely recognized as one of the most cost-effective and environmentally sustainable ways to reduce agricultural runoff into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Secretary Richardson also announced that MALPF will purchase more than \$60 million in development rights this year, to help permanently maintain a solid base of open, working farmland across the state. Since 1977, the state has protected 265,000 acres of farmland in all 23 counties for a public investment of \$490 million.

Natural Resources Secretary Griffin announced an innovative new competitive grant opportunity for local govern-



Dutch and Pat Langenfelder recently opened their farm to the Governor and members of his Cabinet to discuss ag land preservation, cover crops and other programs designed to keep farmers in business in Maryland.

ments, community groups, non-profit organizations, academic institutions and private enterprises partnering to reduce non-point source pollution in upper Eastern Shore and three other priority small watersheds

"Kent County demonstrated the value of smart growth before the concept's inception," said Planning Secretary Hall. "Selected as the best rural place in America to live, this county successfully preserves nearly four acres for every acre of development, yielding miles of farm fields and small villages. Its conscientious strength enables a stable economic foundation as its towns advance focused, deliberate growth."

The announcements were made at Dutch and Pat Langenfelder's Grandview Farm in Kennedyville. The Langenfelders are agricultural leaders and Governor's Hall of Fame inductees who will permanently preserve the 393-acre family farm from development this year through MALPF (pending Board of Public Works approval next month). Mr. and Mrs. Langenfelder are fifth generation Maryland farmers who are preserving their farm so that their three adult children, who actively farm with them, and their grandchildren may continue to run the operation for generations to come.

Farm Bureau loses leader

Frederick County farmer, longtime leader of the Frederick County Farm Bureau and past vice president of the Maryland Farm Bureau Mike Wilcom passed away on Sunday, July 13th.

The family has asked that donations be made to the Mike Wilcom Farm Bureau Agriculture Scholarship c/o Frederick County Farm Bureau, Attn: Larry Howard 6010 Keyser Lane Frederick, MD 21702.

Condolences may be sent to Evelyn Wilcom at P.O. Box 166, Monrovia, MD 21770.



ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR THE 2008 POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The following issue summaries are provided for your consideration as you continue your policy development process. We believe that these issues may be the subjects of debate in Annapolis, in Washington or before your local county government during the 2009. Please call Valerie Connelly or Kurt Fuchs if you have any questions or need additional information. We thank you for your commitment to an inclusive and thorough policy development process in 2008!

Agriculture Sustainability – Market Demands (National Policy)

Many food processing and retail outlets are touting sustainability as an important quality of their products. Some companies are requiring producers to utilize specific production practices and even submit to third-party audits of their farms in order to supply these companies with product. These restrictions on production practices by companies interested in maintaining the appearance of a strong “corporate responsibility” image are likely to impose additional costs on farmers. Most of AFBF policies focus on “market based” approaches to environmental issues. When a company specifies how one may or may not farm, it is a market based approach, but it can certainly have the same effect as a government regulation.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) Who should Farm Bureau define “sustainability?”
- 2) Should farm organizations challenge so-called market demand requirements from processors and retailers?
- 3) Are market-demand approaches better than regulations because all producers (foreign and domestic) must meet the requirements rather than just those under the jurisdiction of the regulator?

Buying “local” food trend (State and Local Policy)

One of the most important trends in consumer food spending is purchasing “locally-produced” food. Whether it is fresh meats and dairy products, fresh fruits and vegetables or even value-added processed items like jams and pickled foods, the “Buy Local” trend has taken root across the country. Our state’s agricultural community is particularly poised to take advantage of this consumer preference shift because we’re located within easy reach of significant population centers like DC, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Wilmington. The only trouble is, what does local mean? A lack of definition allows for slick marketing to imply sweet corn brought up from North Carolina and sold in a supermarket in Maryland is local sweet corn. Even with the best of intentions, producers, consumers and retailers alike may all have a different idea of local products, but unless given a broad framework for what constitutes such a product, they’re free to interpret it as they see fit. Would it benefit both the industry and consumers to have a set definition for “locally-produced” agricultural products?

Questions to Consider:

- 1) Should the criteria be based on a maximum distance from the point of resale to where the product was produced/grown? And if so what is the most feasible distance? 50-mile radius, 100-mile radius, 150-mile radius, etc?

2) Is this something the Maryland Department of Agriculture and relevant stakeholders should pursue or is it perhaps more appropriate for federal level agencies?

3) What are the implications for roadside stands and markets that utilize both out-of-state and local products?

Climate Change/ Global Warming (State and National Policy)

Climate change is *the* hot-button environmental issue at the federal and state levels. Congress has made this issue a priority and it will likely be a priority for a new Administration. Because agriculture and forestry can be greenhouse gas emitters and mitigators, this poses both challenges and opportunities for Farm Bureau’s membership.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) How should agriculture respond to the climate change and global warming debates? Should agriculture consider measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?
- 2) Should Farm Bureau support a carbon tax if proceeds of the tax were allocated to agricultural conservation programs, recognizing a tax would boost input costs?
- 3) Should Farm Bureau endorse a cap-and-trade system that fully recognizes agricultural offsets? What agricultural sectors would benefit/lose the most?
- 4) What role should USDA or other entities play in developing and monitoring a carbon trading system?
- 5) Is a federal program preferable to state and/or regional initiatives already being developed?

Estate Settlements and Tax Implication of Future Agland Preservation Easements (National Policy)

Under the federal tax code, when a farm estate is settled the family has the opportunity to select “farm use” valuation for the settlement formula. Using this process, the family agrees to keep the farm in active agricultural use for at least 10 years. If the farm is sold prior to the 10 years, the IRS will recapture estate tax at a higher use valuation for the number of years the farm was sold early. Unfortunately, the recapture tax is also triggered when a family sells preservation easements on the farm after settlement. The IRS views the sale of development rights as income derived from a source other than agricultural activities. Agland preservation easements have long been viewed by the farm community as a way to permanently preserve the land and acquire the cash necessary to sustain it. For families who are trying to keep farms with significant land, livestock or machinery assets in tact, the option of easement sale may be the only way to pay the estate tax due. A second activity that often triggers the recapture tax on farms in the 10-year program is timbering. The IRS does not recognize timbering as an agriculture practice under current law.

(continued on next page)

Questions to Consider:

- 1) Should the federal tax code be changed to allow the sale of agland preservation and environmental easements on farm estates without a recapture tax?
- 2) Should the federal tax code allow timbering of farmland during the 10-year ag use period?
- 3) Are there other activities or issues that have triggered a recapture tax on a farm after estate settlement that should be addressed in our policy?
- 4) How many farms in your area been sold to pay estate taxes over the last five years?

Forestlands and the 2009 Sustainable Forestry Act (State Policy)

The forest industry is currently circulating a draft legislative package entitled the Sustainable Forestry Act of 2009 in an effort to receive feedback and comment from interested stakeholders prior to the 2009 Session of the General Assembly. The proposal is quite extensive and can be considered the second iteration of a similar legislative package submitted late in the 2008 Session. The following bullet points are an attempt to summarize the most relevant points of the proposal for your consideration, however, if you would like the entire document please call the MFB office and Kurt will provide your county with copies.

- Removal of the \$200,000 cap on the state Woodland Incentives Fund that is funded by a percentage of the transfer tax applied to woodlands and is used to implement best management practices on forested land.
- Encourages the state to develop market-driven ecosystem services trading strategies.
- Promotes various tax incentives such as income tax credits for the preparation and adoption of Forest Stewardship Plans, an exemption from the sales tax for equipment used for silviculture, and property tax credits for lands with Forest Stewardship Plans.
- Establishes a statewide policy of No Net Loss of Privately-Owned forestlands. This overarching policy would include directives for the state to give conservation program funding priority to woodlands over all other lands, including agricultural.
- Although silviculture is already included under the protection of the state's Right to Farm law and nuisance suit protection provisions, the bill calls for silviculture to be defined separately from agriculture.
- It would amend the 8 Guiding Principles of the state's Smart Growth law to ensure that state funding for conservation and land use programs make forestry a priority over all other land uses, including agricultural.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) What impact would a state policy of no net loss of forestlands have on other resource-based land uses such as agriculture? Where would the state find/create more woodlands?
- 2) Should forestlands take priority over agricultural lands under the state's conservation and land use programs?
- 3) Is there a need to separate silviculture (currently included in the right to farm language) from agriculture when establishing protections from nuisance suits for resource-based industries?
- 4) Can agricultural producers and forestland owners (many times one in the same) benefit from enhanced cost-share opportunities to create Forest Stewardship plans and implement best management practices on woodlands?

MD Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation and Woodland Acres (State Policy)

Currently, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation helps preserve productive agricultural land as well as woodlands; however, there is some sentiment from the forest industry that the criteria for woodlands to enter the program are set too high. Additionally, the forest industry believes that because forestry is not in the title of the program, it does not garner the attention they desire. Many farms have at least some timber management lands included in their acreage and some have significant acreage devoted to the timber industry. The criteria for eligibility in the state program includes many things such as soil type, acreage and location with deference paid to the most productive and appropriate agricultural and woodland. Marginal woodlands, just as marginal agricultural lands, are less apt to be considered than prime ag and woodlands.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) Are forestlands already adequately considered for easement purchase through the MALPF program?
- 2) Should criteria for woodland soils be downgraded at the expense of preserving prime woodlands as well as prime agricultural lands?
- 3) Is there a benefit to renaming the program to include "forest" in its title?

Nutrient Management Plan Implementation and Regulation (State Policy)

The Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998 has now been in place for 10 years. Compliance rate for getting and submitting plans to MDA now stands at 98% of operators and 99% of agricultural land in the state. While still working to get the last 2% of operators under a plan, MDA has shifted much of its resources into enforcement and implementation on farms. During FY 2008, MDA initiated progressive enforcement actions with over 1800 operators. Seventeen formal charge letters and 12 notices of default were issued. Current law allows MDA to fine a farmer \$250 for a violation, with a maximum penalty of \$2,000 per year. The agency's ability to conduct effective enforcement of the WQIA has been questioned over the last several years. Some have called for moving the program to MDE. Defenders of MDA believe that higher penalty levels should be available and should be levied on farmers who simply refuse to comply with the law. The Nutrient Management Advisory Committee has recommended that MDA submit legislation in the 2009 Legislative session to increase penalties.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) Should Farm Bureau support higher penalties for farmers who refuse to comply with the law?
- 2) What level of penalty would be more effective to encourage farmers to get and follow a NM plan?
- 3) Should the WQIA program stay at MDA or should MDE take over the enforcement?
- 4) What other resources are needed by farmers to update and implement their NM plans?

Public Availability of Farm Nutrient Management Plans (State Policy)

Under the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998, nutrient management plans became mandatory and filing a copy of an original plan with MDA was

required. At the time, legislators agreed that plans should not be made available to the public. For 10 years, MDA answered requests for copies of plans with denials because of the confidentiality provisions of the law. The understanding was that no information that could identify an individual farmer or specific farmland could be released. Only aggregate information about program implementation was releasable. In recent years, many in the environmental community have made requests for the plans, annual reports and implementation review documents housed at MDA. They argue that they have access to similar information for other industries. Earlier this year, the Attorney General's office determined that the law only required confidentiality for documents for three years. Currently, legal proceedings have been initiated by the Waterkeepers Alliance to obtain the documents. Farm Bureau has responded by seeking an injunction to prohibit MDA from releasing the data. The legal action will play out over the next several months. Regardless of the outcome, there is likely to be legislation next January to allow nutrient management records to be released.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) Should documents and data required by the nutrient management law be available through a Public Information Act request?
- 2) Would we support the release of documents if certain protections were put in place? Like the requirement that any potential lawsuit stemming from documents be considered before a state or local mediation board prior to being accepted in court? Or that MDA be required to investigate and make a determination on compliance prior to the filing of what may be a frivolous lawsuit?
- 3) What other protection is needed if plans are released?
- 4) How do we respond to the argument that if state money was used for the plan then the document should be available to the public? Are plans written by Cooperative Extension with state funding considered state-supported plans?

Property Tax Credit for Property Subject to Agricultural Easement (State Policy)

Farmland in Maryland is given special consideration for property tax purposes. Land that is actively farmed is assessed at a rate between \$250 and \$500 per acre. This is substantially lower than land that is developed into residential or commercial use – which is assessed at several thousands of dollars per acre.

When a farmer sells an agland preservation easement or an environmental trust easement he or she sells the right to develop that property. In many counties, the existence of the easement lowers the assessed value even more, or eliminates the tax assessment altogether. The one portion of the farm that does not receive special assessment consideration is the farmer's home and the one-acre lot surrounding the home. This acre and the house are assessed at residential values.

Questions to consider:

- 1) Should houses on farms receive reduced tax assessments simply because they are near farmland?
2. Should the reduced tax assessment apply to homes on farms in agland preservation programs or should it apply to all farms?
3. How will the decline in property tax revenue impact local governments?
4. Will rural and farm families suffer if there are fewer local dollars for schools and infrastructure projects?
5. How should local governments raise funds to make up the difference if houses on farms receive reduced tax assessments?

Rural Schools (National Policy)

The “No Child Left Behind Act” is expected to be up for reauthorization in 2009. AFBF policy states “this should be reviewed due to the vast implications of the program on children, family and school systems.” The Act mandates states develop an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) system to track student assessment scores and determine the adequacy of schools. Progress or regression is determined by comparing scores between years. Small schools are often misidentified because of statistical unreliability caused by class size fluctuations that have nothing to do with the quality of instruction in the schools.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) What role should the federal government have in determining education policy and priorities?
- 2) What are the most significant challenges faced by rural schools?
- 3) How should the federal government assist rural schools in overcoming those challenges in light of the unique nature of each rural area in the nation?
- 4) What changes are needed in the No Child Left Behind Act to accommodate the unique challenges faced by rural schools?

Transportation and Trucking Laws (National Issue)

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA or SAFETEA-LU) is set to expire on September 30, 2009. Federal transportation legislation is integral to the infrastructure and economic survival of the United States. Issues to be debated during the \$244 billion reauthorization of this bill will include transit, motor carrier safety, research, planning, hazardous materials transportation, rail and finance. A Maryland farm-specific issue that should be discussed is the need to allow gross and axle weight tolerance on federal highways. Certain products (such as milk in central Maryland) cannot be delivered to market without use of federal highways. Weight tolerances allowed under state law are not observed on federal highways. Competitor states like New York and Massachusetts are allowed to carry additional weight on farm trucks on federal highways.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) What are the needs of Rural America with regard to SAFETEA reauthorization?
- 2) How should Congress address priority transportation safety issues without impeding the unique needs of agriculture?
- 3) During reauthorization of SAFETEA what should Farm Bureau's priorities be in the areas of farm truck safety, commercial drivers licenses, truck weight and farm exemptions, custom harvesters and interstate commerce?

University of Maryland – Rural Enterprise Development Center (State Policy)

The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension is dedicated to helping the state's agricultural and natural resources industries thrive. To provide entrepreneurs, new and beginning farmers, and start-up and maturing businesses with the highest level of educational support for ensuring developmental success, the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension is launching the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center (MREDC) as part of our new Community Resource & Economic Development initiative. This virtual center, situated at the

Western Maryland Research and Education Center in Keedysville, MD, seeks to offer programming and one-on-one consultation services state-wide in:

business and product development, business planning and marketing, entrepreneurship, intergenerational transfer issues (estate planning), market research studies, develop enterprise budgets, perform cost/benefit analysis, policy analysis/assessment of state/county ordinances, access to expertise and serve as a portal for educational resources, serve as a launch pad to a wide variety of resources, and train and provide assistance to new, beginning, next generational farmers and existing AGNR enterprises.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) Will the MREDC be useful to many of the farmers in your area of the state?
- 2) Should we support the program as a priority item for funding in the state budget?

Water Appropriations and Use Issues (State Policy)

Over the last few years, farmers have been challenged in certain parts of the state over the right to use water to irrigate crops. Continued residential development near farms and the 2007 drought have made the water battles a major issue for government officials at the state and local level. Applications for well permits on farms on the lower shore have been held up while the state Department of the Environment does in-depth analysis of water resources in the area. Some of the delay is caused by the lack of water data in specific locations from the U.S. Geological Survey. MDE has indicated that they will have to do more water resource analysis themselves before approving permits in the future. This will be a challenge because of budgetary restraints. There are indications that fees for annual water use or additional fees for well permits may be proposed as a way to pay for better research into the availability water in the underground aquifers. Current law recognizes water use for farm purposes as a high priority – just behind health and safety needs. Farmers currently apply for water use permits with MDE and make annual reports on the amount of water used by each farm well. There have not been fees assessed thus far.

- 1) Have farmers in your area applied for well permits and had to wait more than a few weeks?
- 2) How important is unlimited supply of water on farms for the future of agriculture in MD?

- What type of farm operation is most vulnerable?
- 3) Should there be a prioritization among farm types for water use?
 - 4) Should residential development be halted when there are indications of low water availability for the future?
 - 5) Should the state simply appropriate more general funds to water resource analysis if it is a priority?
 - 6) Should all state water users pay a fee of some sort to fund water resource analysis?
 - 7) If yes, how should such a fee be structured? Annually? Based on quantity of water used? How should residential wells be assessed?

How to Participate in the Policy Development Process

As a Farm Bureau member you are entitled to *and encouraged* to help write the policy statements that guide our legislative advocacy efforts throughout the year. You may draft a policy statement based on one of the issues outline above or on an entirely different issue that impacts your farm business. To participate in the process you should:

1. Contact your county Farm Bureau President or Secretary to find out when the county policy development meeting will occur. A list of those contacts can be found at www.mdfarmbureau.com under the “About” tab. Choose the Board of Directors list to find your county president.
2. Or you can email your suggestions to the MFB office and we will forward them to your county Farm Bureau. Send your policy development proposals to valeriec.mdfb@erols.com. Make sure to include your name, address, phone number, county of Farm Bureau membership and an explanation of the policy suggestions to help other Farm Bureau members debate your proposal.
3. Follow up with your county Farm Bureau in early fall to make sure they have considered your policy suggestions. Attend the local meeting to explain your issue to other farmers if necessary. Keep in mind that if you send a policy recommendation to the state office by email, it will be sent back out for the county to consider. We can not guarantee local adoption of your policy resolution. All of our policy positions originate at the local level.

Join Your Farm Bureau Family in San Antonio

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operations, a 16,000-head cattle feedlot, the Lyndon B. Johnson Historical Park, LBJ Ranch and much more.

The tentative agenda is:

Saturday, January 10
Travel to San Antonio, Texas

Sunday & Monday:
January 11&12:
onvention Sessions

Tuesday, January 13
Optional Tours and Sightseeing

Wednesday, January 14
Return to Maryland

Final details and pricing will be available soon so check the next issue of the *Spotlight* or visit www.mdfarmbureau.com for more information. If you would like to receive a trip brochure when they are printed, call (800) 248-9012 or email melh.mdfb@erols.com to request one. Include your name, address, phone number and email address if you have one.

County Farm Bureau Membership Honor Roll

(As of June 30, 2008)

County Farm Bureau Membership Goals are based upon Regular Members, represented in the first two columns. The last column reports the total members paid, including both regular and associates.

County	YTD Regular Members Paid	Needed for goal	YTD All Members Paid
Allegany**	129	-3	3408
Anne Arundel	928	40	4530
Baltimore	520	42	932
Calvert	277	13	853
Caroline**	376	-11	1597
Carroll**	916	-59	798
Cecil	294	15	1063
Cecil	242	-8	684
Charles**	226	10	2209
Dorchester	892	-11	184
Frederick**	181	-3	1928
Garrett**	452	-13	1162
Harford**	199	8	368
Howard	255	-6	3559
Kent**	315	10	2328
Montgomery	224	12	592
Prince George's	320	-8	772
Queen Anne's**	342	3	502
St. Mary's	234	-6	699
Somerset**	278	13	871
Talbot	275	-5	778
Washington**	337	22	614
Wicomico	265	7	
Worcester			
Maryland Totals	8,477	63	30,571

Note: Due to the CIF Nationwide Program and 60-days due payments, 2008 membership will not be final until August 31, 2008.

Maryland Farm Bureau Exceeds 30,000 Member Goal

(continued from page 1)

Thank You Nationwide Agents

Nationwide Agents continue to sign new Maryland Farm Bureau members as they offer member-only discounts on many insurance products. Statewide, agents wrote over **6,600 members** during the 2008 membership year. We thank every agent who helped us achieve membership success. The top three agents who will be recognized during the Maryland Farm Bureau Convention in December are:

David Kushner, Gaithersburg	177 New Members
Robert Stastny, Baltimore	158 New Members
Jack Hutchison, Severna Park	131 New Members

Other agents who wrote over 100 new Farm Bureau members this year are:

Tim Fenlon, Silver Spring
 Philip Simmerer, Largo
 Mark Spero, Owings Mills
 Gary Young, Gaithersburg
 Gregory Whitten, Cambridge

Why I Support the MFB PAC

By Fred Walzel
 Silesia, MD



Fred Walzel

In 1925, a relative of mine, along with other farmers, organized a group so their concerns would be heard and they would be able to buy supplies in large quantities. In 1926, they became known as the Prince George's County Farm Bureau.

Whatever caused those men to organize then is even more important today. I have seen the area where I live change from one that was almost totally dependent on agriculture, to an area which is very urban.

Many of our state leaders are from urban areas and have very little contact with an actual farmer. We have an excellent team working in Annapolis, however, they need help on the local level.

This is where I feel the PAC plays a very important role – having contact with our state senators and delegates and making them aware of issues important to farmers.

The MFB PAC asks each candidate to answer questions which are important to agriculture. Based on the responses, and the incumbents voting record, a decision is made by each county Farm Bureau if an endorsement is to be made. These recommendations help decide if a candidate will gain our monetary support.

Fundraising is very important and it has to be done by all of us. I would ask everyone to support the PAC in any way that you can. We would then be able to support those candidates who are very important supporters of agriculture.

Having been around politicians most of my life and having known several for many years, I feel the personal contact with them is also very important.

Nationwide® Agribusiness Insurance & Maryland Farm Bureau
Working Together to Protect What Matters

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

August

- 2 Blessing of the Combines, Snow Hill, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 3 Somerset County Farm Bureau Picnic and Miss Contest
- 3 Howard County Farm Bureau Miss Contest
- 7 Kent County Farm Bureau Picnic
- 10 Cecil County Farm Bureau Picnic
- 20-22 Miss Maryland Agriculture Contest, Maryland State Fairgrounds

September

- 6 Maryland Farm Bureau PAC Sporting Clay Fundraiser, Glenn Dale
- 7 Dorchester County Young Farmer Sporting Clay Shoot
- 11 Caroline County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Denton
- 23 Allegany/Garrett Policy Meeting, Allegany Fairgrounds
- 27 Carroll County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Gun Raffle

October

- 7 Allegany County Farm Bureau Banquet, Fairgrounds
- 9 Frederick County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, New Midway Fire Hall
- 16 Garrett County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 28 Carroll County Farm Bureau Banquet

November

- 5 Baltimore County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 6 Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation Banquet
- 8 Harford County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 11 Prince George's County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Baden Volunteer Fire Department, Brandywine
- 11 Montgomery County Farm Bureau Banquet

December

- 7-10 Maryland Farm Bureau Annual Meeting and Convention, Ocean City

January 2009

- 11-14 American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting and Convention, San Antonio, Texas

(To get your county's activities listed on the calendar, please send the date, event, place and time to Susan Summers at ssummers@comcast.net.)

Maryland Farm Bureau Seeks Court Protection for Family Farms

(continued from page 1)

MFB Second Vice President, Chuck Fry, a dairy and turkey farmer from Frederick County explains, "We have a regulatory system that holds us accountable for proper nutrient use. We submit the appropriate documents to the state agency charged with enforcing the law. Agency data shows that 98 percent of farm operators are meeting the requirements of the law. I'm not sure that 'third party' enforcement of state laws is the direction we should be taking in Maryland."

In further explanation, Mike Phipps said, "The New York-based Waterkeepers Alliance came into Maryland with a stated goal of targeting family poultry farms with lawsuits. These farmers are struggling to meet the rising costs associated with farming and protecting the environment. Any competitive edge they have is built into their farm nutrient management plan. The last thing they need is the release of their business plan or expensive legal bills to prove they are doing what the state already enforces." The Waterkeepers Alliance Public Information Act request is currently targeted at family farms with poultry in Dorchester, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester counties.

Maryland Farm Bureau
8930 Liberty Road, Randallstown, MD 21133-4295

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Maryland Farm Bureau PAC event looking for participants

**Sporting Clay Event
is September 6th**

The Maryland Farm Bureau PAC will hold a sporting clay fundraiser on Saturday, Sept. 6, at the Prince George's County Trap & Skeet Center in Glenn Dale. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. and shooters will begin at 10 a.m.

MFB PAC is a political action committee organized to help elect and re-elect farm-friendly members to the Maryland General Assembly and other statewide offices. MFB PAC has an 88 percent success rate in the last two election cycles for candidates it has endorsed.

Registration for the event is \$85 for an individual shooter and \$500 for a stand sponsorship, which includes 4 shooters. All participants will receive 50 rounds of ammo, lunch, an event T-shirt and a chance at winning a Stoeger Condor Over/Under in 12-gauge valued at over \$300. The shotgun will be awarded based on a drawing at the conclusion of the event. Top scores for individuals and teams will also be recognized at the lunch.

Event planners hope to register at least 50 shooters for this challenging course. For registration material, log onto www.mdfarmbureau.com or call the office at (410) 922-3426.